



watercolor by Hazel Hannell

HAZEL HANNELL:

the legendary painter-potter of Furnessville

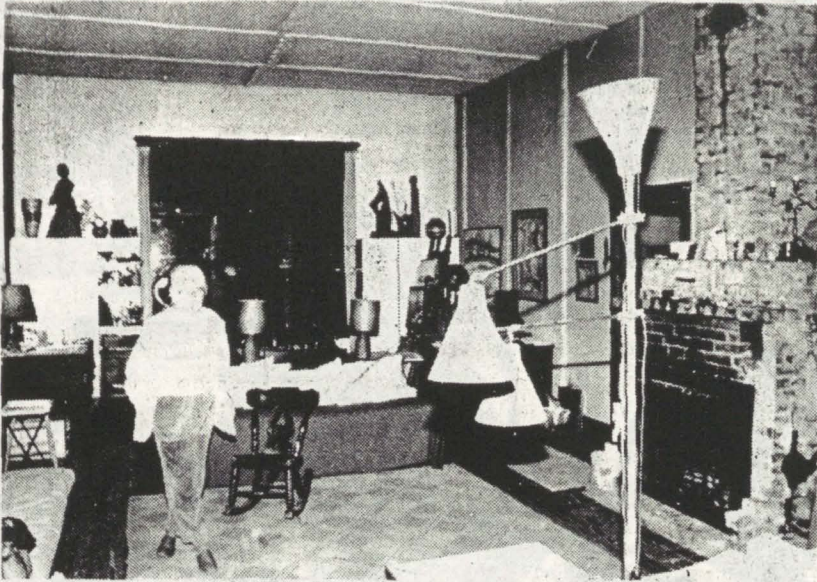
One of the great unrecorded legends of the dunes, not yet in histories of the region and how it came to be settled, is busy making paintings at her unusual home atop a secluded dune, or can be

found forming and firing ceramic works at her pottery a gently-sloped hundred yards away.

The legend is named Hazel Hannell, and most of her time is spent now, as it has

Dunes Country 'Winter '82 pg. 19

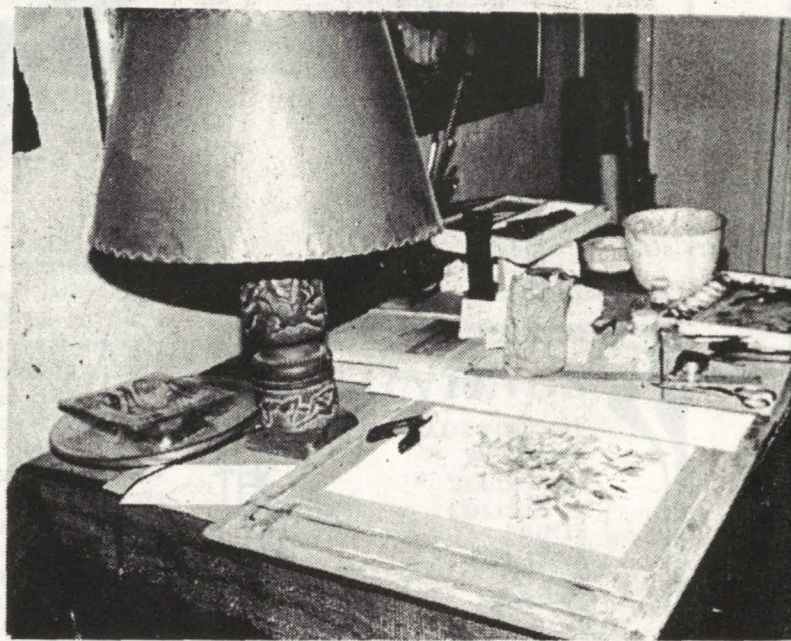
Art



Hazel in her livingroom, showing her watercolors,



a closeup of one of her paintings, and the wintertime desk at which she works.



been since she and her husband Vin moved here in the early '30's, either at the house or the pottery, or literally in between.

For alongside the sandy path on her 8-acre estate from house to kiln grow the wildflowers which in the spring, summer and often the fall, provide the subject matter for the delicate, sensitive watercolor nature portraits that Hazel makes of hepaticas and asters and other flora of the area.

Her paintings and ceramics have graced rooms nationwide since she and Vin — who passed away in 1964 — set up the kiln in the '30's, and got a representative to promote their wares in fine shops from coast to coast. These days, however, Hazel works alone, shows her ceramics each year at two local art fairs, and lets the paintings be handled principally through the rental gallery of the Art Institute of Chicago.

She and Vin, both of them Art

Institute graduates and actively producing artworks in Chicago of all kinds for interior decorators when the '29 crash cancelled everything on their drawing boards, came to the dunes to visit the Fred Beisels — Chicago artists who had preceded them here — and began looking for land. No one would sell an acre or two — they had a hard time buying eight — because it was all farming tracts, and the Eastward migration of Chicago settlers had not yet begun. On their eight Furnessville acres Vin designed their house: a forty-foot livingroom with ceilings twelve feet high being the most prominent feature, and it is here in this space, surrounded by books, paintings, sculpture and mementos of artist friends and past accolades, that Hazel works each day.

Together the Hannells introduced many Chicago artists to the Porter County area, and greatly helped to introduce

Porter County to art, through their activity in the Association of Artists and Craftsmen of Porter County (AACPC), the latter bringing together into an exhibiting group many of the friends whom the Hannells had, in the early 1940's, brought to see the wonders of the dunes.

Born and raised at LaGrange, Illinois, Hazel's earliest experience with paints was being allowed to use the watercolor palette of her mother, who also painted from time to time. Hazel's interest in art led her to Chicago after graduation from high school, and study at the Emma Church School of Art. When Emma was suddenly called away, the school vanished, and Hazel enrolled at the Art Institute in the hope of finding it more stable, or at least more permanent.

It is said that everyone has a handwriting of their own, their own



method of expression. Although there have been many changes in the art world during the last fifty years, there have been almost none in the work of Hazel Hannell, whose intimacy with, and sensitivity to, the natural world around her, produces paintings today with the same introspection and examination as they had in her artistic beginnings.

There is a straightforwardness to her expression, a forthrightness and honesty that knows no school or period. "I get intrigued with the way something looks" she says, applying no more test to her subject matter than that she likes it. Something in it speaks to her; she tries to capture it.

This spirited naturalism is particularly evident in her studies of flowers and grasses, in which her diligence over the years has produced a mastery of what she wants and how she achieves it. A knitting together, an interlocking across the plane of the picture, of the shapes, colors, movements and forces that comprise this work. Energetic, timeless, she keeps for us the gentle bobbing of the petals, the luminescence of the subjects that crowd the forest floor, the intertwining of stems and shoots and grasses and pollen cups all equal and equally depicted in her quiet, yet vital studies.

Over the years she has gone on many painting pilgrimages with her good friend Harriett Rex Smith, with whom, for ten years or more, she vanished a week or two each year, only to reappear in Door County at a place called "The Clearing", a nature wonderland created by the famed Chicago landscape architect Jens Jensen.

Nowadays she travels back and forth

to the tiny town of Ajiji, a little fishing village on Lake Chapalla in Mexico, to paint the bright blue skies and orangy sands of that tropic (and warm) clime during our North American mid-winter.

Her work is represented in private collections of four foreign countries — Finland, France, Brazil and Mexico; and in at least eight American states.

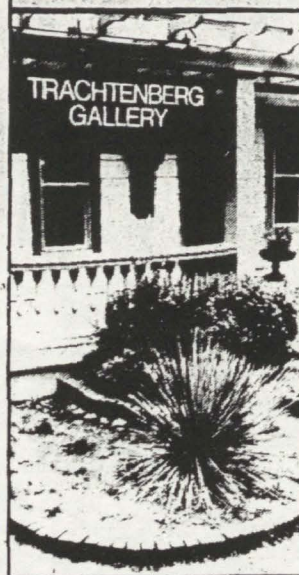
Visitors who see her at folk festivals making pots as they were made 100 years ago, can visit her also at the Hannell pottery in Furnessville, and be shown not only the wares that she makes and sells along with her paintings in a Sales Room, but the cottage-industry factory which she and Vin set up and worked for lo these many years.

Bus tours often make the Hannell pottery one of their principal stops.

In Brown County, the State of Indiana has preserved the home and also the studio of T.C. Steele, a painter who lived there the latter years of his life, as a shrine and museum which can be visited by everyone. It is the hope of this writer that the kiln-works and also the 1930's home of the Hannells, already in the National Lakeshore, can be retained intact in perpetuity, to show everyone who comes in future years where two early Chicago artists of vision and talent came into an aesthetic wilderness, brought reinforcements, tamed the citizenry; and where Hazel to this very day — and hopefully for many additional days — brings us the joy and visual delight of her artistic discoveries.

You can call the Hannell Pottery for an appointment at (219) 926-4568. It is across the street from the Schoolhouse Shop, in Furnessville, next to Chesterton.

Bringing Art & People Together



- Collectable Graphics
- Sculpture
- Distinctive Posters
- Art Glass & Woodcuts
- Earthenware & Pottery
- Watercolors & Oil Paintings
- Fiber/Fabric Art
- Personalized Framing

TRACHTENBERG GALLERY

430 West SeventyThird
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Tues - Sat 10-5
Sun 11-4

PAINTINGS

HAND MADE POTTERY

WEAVINGS

SCULPTURE

COLLECTOR

PRINTS

CREATIVE

PICTURE

FRAMING

Hours: Mon.-Sat: 9:30-5

219/462-3883

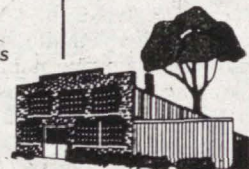
203 JEFFERSON
VALPARAISO, IN

THE
ARTISTS'
DEN



February Exhibit
Duneland Weavers
Guild

Daily 2-5 P.M.
Closed Monday



CHESTERTON ART GALLERY

115 South Fourth Street

winter
art fair

through January

926-4711

ASSOCIATION OF ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN OF PORTER COUNTY